



The Handwriting on the Wall

A weary mother returned from the store,
Lugging groceries through the kitchen door.
Awaiting her arrival was her 8-year-old son,
Anxious to relate what his younger brother had done.

“While I was out playing and Dad was on a call,
T.J. took his crayons and wrote on the wall!
It’s on the new paper you just hung in the den.
I told him you’d be mad at having to do it again.”

She let out a moan and furrowed her brow,
“Where is your little brother right now?”
She emptied her arms and with a purposeful stride,
She marched to his closet where he had gone to hide.

She called his full name as she entered his room.
He trembled with fear — he knew that meant doom!
For the next ten minutes, she ranted and raved
About the expensive wallpaper and how she had saved.

Lamenting all the work it would take to repair.
She condemned his actions and total lack of care.
The more she scolded, the madder she got,
Then stomped from his room, totally distraught!

She headed for the den to confirm her fears.
When she saw the wall, her eyes flooded with tears.
The message she read pierced her soul with a dart.
It said: “I love Mommy,” surrounded by a heart.

Well, the wallpaper remained, just as she found it,
With an empty picture frame hung to surround it.
A reminder to her, and indeed to all,
Take time to read the handwriting on the wall.

Author Unknown

Dear Cook Central Caregivers:



Jose Candelas

As the associate deputy for Cook County, it is my pleasure to recognize Cook Central caregivers during Foster Parent Appreciation Month. I want you to know that the entire Field Operations staff understand the importance of the work you do, the dedication you show, and the love you put into that work.

These are exciting times for child welfare in Illinois. As you may know, Director Samuels has made great strides in enhancing our collective ability to better serve the children we place in your care. New initiatives such as Integrated Assessment, Youth Investment Teams, and others show great promise. It is important to understand that foster parents have crucial roles in these and other programs.

More than ever during Foster Parent Appreciation Month, let me congratulate you, thank you, and convey the appreciation of all my staff as we recognize and celebrate Foster Parent Appreciation Month and the important work that you do. Thank you.

Cook Central offices prepare for re-accreditation review

Cook Central has been very busy preparing for the reaccreditation visit from the Council on Accreditation (COA). This will be the final region in the state to go through this reaccreditation process. The site visit is an opportunity for the region to demonstrate that its policies, procedures and practices comply with COA standards. In addition to reviewing case records and interviewing staff, the review team will also conduct interviews with foster parents.

Staff will be contacting foster parents to be interviewed during

the Council's visit. The region was given the following dates:

- June 19, 2005 for both 3518 W. Division and 4909 W. Division
- June 26, 2005 for the Maywood site

Foster parent participation is vital to this process. The region will offer babysitting for the children of foster parents asked to come in for an interview. This will make it easier for caregivers to participate.

Look for your copy of the Cook Central Foster Parent Law Implementation Plan

Cook Central recently mailed the Foster Parent Law Implementation Plan for 2005 to all families supervised by DCFS. Additionally, this year the region is also mailing out the plan to all of the region's unlicensed relative providers. The committee that worked on the plan felt that unlicensed providers also needed to know what is covered in the Foster Parent Law and how these rights and responsibilities impact

children currently placed in their homes.

The Foster Parent Law Implementation Plan must be written each year. The Cook Central administration invites foster parents to comment on the plan and take part in future updates. Questions or comments can be directed to Donna Cain, Resource Development Manager, at 773-854-0636 or 773-292-7937.

Cook Central Youth Advisory Board ready to take on new issues

The staff at Cook Central is working with the Regional Youth Advisory Board (RYAB) to increase youth participation in the region. In future monthly mailings to foster parents, the region will include flyers encouraging foster parents to ask more youth to participate in the RYAB.

The youth boards were established to give a voice to youth in care. The RYAB promotes youth empowerment, self-advocacy, and information exchange. The board dedicates itself to addressing the issues and concerns of youth who are now or have ever been in care. Youth members focus on programs such as Youth in College, Youth in Employment, Transitional Living Programs and Independent Living programs. The Board also discusses important transition issues such as college and scholarships, legislation that affects youth, and life skills training for independence. Membership is open to all youth between the ages of 14 and 21.

At Cook Central, monthly meetings take place on the third Tuesday of every month at 3518 W. Division from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. Refreshments are provided at these meetings. In addition to the meeting, life skills training and credit hours are provided to the attendees.

For additional information regarding the RYAB please contact:

- Marcus McCaskill at the Chicago Area Project, 1-888-472-0990 x232.
- Donna Cain, Resource Development Manager, 773-854-0636 or 773-292-7937.

The Statewide Youth Advisory Board is planning to publish a newsletter that will be produced quarterly beginning this Summer. They are in the process of soliciting the following writing contributions:

- Articles
- Recognitions
- News about the Advisory Board
- Short stories
- Announcements
- Concerns
- Topics of interest
- News about Regional Boards
- Accomplishments
- Upcoming events
- Photographs
- Cartoons

Submissions are not limited to this list. However, all entries must be approved by the Department of Children and Family Services' Office of Communications. There will be no exceptions! Youth can send their submissions to: Yvonne Jeffries, Open Book Program, 435 E. 35th Street, Chicago, IL 60616, fax: 773-288-4345, or email jyma@sbcglobal.net.

Cook Central teaches updates on school laws

The Cook County Education Advisors hosted a training titled "Advocating for Students in Special Education and Updates on the Law." Wallace Winter and Larry Parham of the Legal Assistance Foundation of Metropolitan Chicago shared their legal expertise in dealing with school matters.

The training covered the basics of laws concerning special education. It also emphasized how foster and adoptive parents can advocate to ensure that school administrators uphold students' educational rights. Caregivers had an opportunity to ask questions about discipline procedures and how they relate to students with Individualized Education Plans.

The Cook Central educational advisors can share this information with parents who were not able to attend. Dawn Overend can be reached at 773-292-7731 or doverend@idcfs.state.il.us.

The Education Advisors are part of the NIU Education Access Project for DCFS. They are available to assist foster and adoptive parents (both DCFS and private agency families) in advocating for youth's educational needs.

Dear Cook South Caregivers



Michael
Byrd

I write to you as the new Regional Administrator of the Cook South Region. Unfortunately, I may never have the opportunity to meet many of you face to face.

But, everyday I recognize that decisions I may make as a part of the Regional team and as part of the DCFS child welfare agency may impact you. I recognize too that everyday in which you are a caregiver to any youth in need of a home, you too are impacting their lives forever. Because of this we are irrevocably connected. It is therefore in humility and sincerity that I recognize your efforts to foster the physical well-being of youth in care, as well as their ability to learn and grow.

I personally understand the influence that the home in which a child is raised can have on the child's view of the world. I want you to know that I and each of my staff understand the importance of the work you do as you advocate for, face challenges with and tend to the needs of children.

We are doing our part to help you. We are making changes; and with that can come growing pains. Yet, I believe that those who enter the service of foster care and child welfare see the possibility of positively affecting change in people's lives. We believe we are

all somehow connected. These children and families involved in the child welfare system are our families; they are our brothers and sisters, nieces and nephews, cousins and friends. Even if not related in the literal sense, certainly we are a part of a body. Any one part of the body that is in need affects the rest of the body.

This is a family, which has the collective purpose of improving the quality of children's lives, specifically improving the lives of those we see in need. Let's expand the proverb, so that our "village" helps to raise the children we are blessed to have in our lives and impact with our efforts.

More than ever during Foster Parent Appreciation Month, let me congratulate you, thank you, and convey the appreciation of all my staff as we recognize and celebrate Foster Parent Appreciation Month and the important work that you do to strengthen the children and families we serve. Thank you.

Michael Byrd
Cook South Regional
Administrator

Cook South Foster Parent Support Group

The Cook South Foster Parent Support Group was established to meet the needs of the region's foster parents. Over the last two years, the group has dealt with a variety of subjects that were of interest to foster parents. It has covered such topics as Stress Management, summer activities and programs for children, medically complex children, community resources, behavior management, and working with the abused and neglected child.

In a recent meeting, the group dealt with working with teenagers and conflict resolution. After seeing a video of conflict between a mother and daughter, the group had a lively discussion on solutions for handling conflict. Defining the problem, listening to the person you're in conflict with, showing respect, and looking for ways to resolve the problem, were some of the suggestions discussed. The discussion was so interesting that foster parents have requested more sessions on working with teenagers.

The Cook South Foster Parent Support Group is open to all foster and adoptive parents. The group continues to meet the second Tuesday of each month at 10am, at the Emerald Office, located at 6201 S. Emerald. If you would like more information about the group, please call 773-371-6113.

Thank you Cook North foster parents



Sari Rowitz, Jacqueline Bright, Chris McGrath and Mamie Robinson

Although May is Foster Parent Appreciation Month, we recognize your hard work and dedication throughout the year. Through our work together we continue to treat our children and families with dignity and respect. Together we create an atmosphere of teamwork that is invested in achieving permanency, safety and well-being in the best interest of children and families.

In our region, we remain committed to serving you by offering appropriate trainings to provide you with tools for working with our youth. We strive for openness and have created avenues for you to offer compliments and criticisms. Each year we invite you to join us in creating a Foster Parent Law Implementation Plan that reflects your rights and addresses your responsibilities.

On behalf of the Cook North staff, administration, youth and families, we would like to express our sincere appreciation for the committed caregivers who are a valuable part of our team.

Cook North Advisory Council wants YOU!

Ellen Kazaras recently stepped down from serving as Cook North's representative to the Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council. The Cook North Region would like to thank her for serving as one of the representatives on the Statewide Foster Care Council. For the last several years, she has represented the local foster parent community by participating on various committees at both the statewide and local levels. Kazaras was a staunch advocate for foster parents and we wish her well.

With her departure, the region currently has two vacancies for representatives from the Cook North Region to participate on the Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council. Minimally, to be considered for the position a candidate must:

- Hold a valid DCFS foster care license
- Live within the Cook North Region
- Be willing to volunteer to represent the region and attend bi-monthly statewide meetings
- Participate on various working committees
- Attend the regional foster care advisory council meetings on the second Tuesday morning of every month at 1911 S. Indiana
- Participate in the Regional Foster Parent Resolution

Panel for grievances, as needed

- Be able to travel to various locations around the state for bi-monthly, full-day meetings, including possible overnight stays. Travel and child care expenses will be reimbursed

All interested applicants should send a letter including:

- Name
- Provider ID
- Address
- Phone—home and work
- Length of time as a foster parent
- Type of foster care provided
- Brief statement of interest about why you would like to represent the Cook North region
- Brief statement about the qualifications/experiences that you would bring to the council

All applicants who complete and return the letter by Wednesday June 8 will be contacted by June 15 in order to schedule an interview with the Representative Search Panel. All appointments will then be made by Director Bryan Samuels. Hopefully the new statewide representative will be identified by June 30, 2005.

Information can be sent to: Sari Rowitz, 1911 S. Indiana, Chicago, Illinois 60616 or via e-mail at srowitz@idcfs.state.il.us.

Summer fun in the windy city!

21st Annual Chicago Gospel Music Festival
June 3-5 (Millennium Park)

22nd Annual Chicago Blues Festival ~ June 9-12

25th Annual Taste of Chicago ~ June 24-July 4

15th Annual Chicago Country Music Festival
June 25-26

13th Annual Race to the Taste ~ June 26

6th Annual Chicago Outdoor Film Festival
July 12-Aug 23

12th Annual Mayor's Cup Youth Soccer Tournament ~ July 23-24

48th Annual Venetian Night ~ July 30

47th Annual Chicago Air and Water Show
August 20-21

17th Annual Viva! Chicago Latin Music Festival
August 27-28

27th Annual Chicago Jazz Festival
September 1-4

9th Annual Celtic Fest Chicago ~ September 17-18

Look to Chicago to find fun activities for your family this summer. There is plenty to keep you busy. For more information, check out the City of Chicago's Tourism Board web site at www.egov.cityofchicago.org.

Chicago is also home to many museums, some of which have free days during the summer (some free days start in fall). Museums are a great way for families to learn and enjoy all that the city has to offer.

Free Mondays

The Adler Planetarium
1300 S. Lake Shore Drive
312-922-STAR (7827)
www.adlerplanetarium.org
September 15 - December 23

Chicago Historical Society
Clark Street at North Avenue
312-642-4600
www.chicagohistory.com

The Field Museum
1400 S. Lake Shore Drive
312-922-9410
www.fmnh.org
September 15 - December 23

Museum of Science and Industry
57th Street and Lake Shore Drive
773-684-1414
www.msichicago.org
September 15 - November 25

The Shedd Aquarium
1200 S. Lakeshore Drive
312-939-2438
www.sheddnet.org
October 6 - December 23

Free Tuesdays

The Adler Planetarium
1300 S. Lake Shore Drive
312-922-STAR (7827)
www.adlerplanetarium.org
September 15 - December 23

The Art Institute of Chicago
111 S. Michigan Avenue
www.artic.edu
312-443-3600

The Field Museum
1400 S. Lake Shore Drive
312-922-9410
www.fmnh.org
September 15 - December 23

International Museum of Surgical Science
1524 N. Lakeshore Drive
312-642-6502
www.imss.org/html/frames

Museum of Contemporary Art
Tuesdays 5 p.m. to 8 p.m.
220 E. Chicago Avenue
312-280-2660
www.mcachicago.org

Museum of Science and Industry
57th Street and Lake Shore Drive
773-684-1414
www.msichicago.org

September 15 - November 25,
Thanksgiving and Christmas Day

The Shedd Aquarium

1200 S. Lakeshore Drive
312-939-2438
www.sheddnet.org
October 6 - December 23

Swedish American Museum and Children's Museum of Immigration

5211 N. Clark Street
Chicago, IL 60640
773-728-8111
www.swedishamericanmuseum.org
Second Tuesday of every month

Free Wednesdays

Clarke House Museum

1827 S. Indiana Avenue
312-326-1480
www.cityofchicago.org/
CulturalAffairs/ClarkeHouse/
ClarkeHouse

Glessner House Museum

1800 S. Prairie Avenue
312-326-1480
www.glessnerhouse.org

Free Thursdays

Chicago Children's Museum

700 E. Grand Avenue
312-527-1000
www.chichildrensmuseum.org
5 p.m. - 8 p.m.

Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum

2430 N. Cannon Drive
773-755-5100
www.naturemuseum.org

Free Fridays

Spertus Museum
618 S. Michigan Avenue
312-322-1747
www.spertus.edu/

Free Sundays

DuSable Museum of African American History

740 E. 56th Place
773-947-0600
www.dusablemuseum.org

Cook County Advocate

Regional Reporters:

Cook North

Sari Rowitz

312-328-2484 office
312-328-2688 fax
SRowitz@idcfs.state.il.us
1911 S. Indiana Ave.
Chicago, IL 60616

Cook Central

Donna Cain

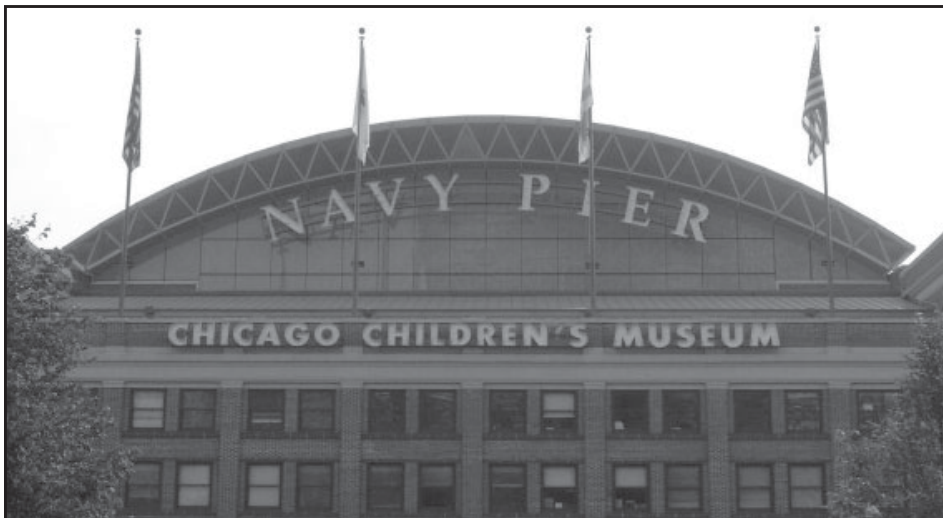
773-292-7937 office
773-292-7861 fax
DCain@idcfs.state.il.us
3718 W. Division
Chicago, IL 60651

Cook South

Bobby Evans

773-371-6146 office
773-371-6065 fax
BEvans@idcfs.state.il.us
6201 S. Emerald
Chicago, IL 60621

Anyone can call the regional reporter with foster parent association news and schedules; local training notices; features on foster families and community members working for children; photos; and ideas for news articles or supportive services that would be helpful for caregivers to know.



Cook County Training Calendar

FosterPRIDE In-Service Training

All licensed foster parents and adoptive parents are welcome to attend any or all of the PRIDE In-Service Trainings to enhance their skills and meet yearly training requirements.

Module 1 - *The Foundation for Meeting the Developmental Needs of Children* (Four 3-hour sessions = 12 training hours)

Module 2 - *Using Discipline to Protect and Nurture* (Three 3-hour sessions = 9 training hours)

Module 3 - *Child Development* - New module being written

Module 4 - *Child Sexual Development and Sexual Abuse* (Two 3-hour sessions = 6 training hours)

Module 5 - *Supporting Relationships Between Children and Their Families* (Three 3-hour sessions = 9 training hours)

Module 6 - *Working as a Professional Team Member* (Three 3-hour sessions = 9 training hours)

Module 7 - *Promoting Children's Personal & Cultural Identity* (Two 3-hour sessions = 6 training hours)

Module 8 - *Promoting Permanency Outcomes* (Three 3-hour sessions = 9 training hours)

Module 9 - *Managing the Fostering Experience* (Two 3-hour sessions = 6 training hours)

Module 10 - *Understanding the Effects of Chemical Dependency on Children & Families* (Five 3-hour sessions = 15 training hours)

COOK NORTH

		Module
City Colleges of Chicago		
June 18 (Sat) & June 25 (Sat)	9:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.	6
Aug. 30, Sept. 1 & 6 (Tue/Thu)	6:30-9:30 p.m.	2
Association House - Spanish		
Sept. 17 (Sat) & Sept. 24 (Sat)	9:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.	1
Volunteers of America		
Aug. 6 (Sat) & Aug. 13 (Sat)	9:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.	6
July 9 (Sat) & July 16 (Sat)	9:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.	8

COOK CENTRAL

		Module
Circle Urban Ministries		
June 4, 11 & 18 (Sat)	9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.	2

COOK SOUTH

		Module
DCFS Harvey Office		
June 9, 14, 16, 21 & 23 (Mon/Wed)	6:30-9:30 p.m.	10
July 13, 18, 20 & 25 (Mon/Wed)	6:30-9:30 p.m.	1
Sept. 10 (Sat) & Sept. 17 (Sat)	9:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.	5
Kennedy-King College		
July 9 (Sat) & July 16 (Sat)	9:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.	2
LSSI		
June 1, 6 & 8 (Mon/Wed)	6:30-9:30 p.m.	4
Sept. 19, 21, 26, 28 & Oct. 3 (Mon/Wed)	6:30-9:30 p.m.	10
St. Bernard's Hospital		
July 12, 14 & 19 (Tue/Thu)	6-9 p.m.	4
Sept. 13, 15 & 20 (Tue/Thu)	6-9 p.m.	2

Educational Advocacy

Two 3-hour sessions = 6 training hrs.

It is mandatory for one foster parent in each family to attend Educational Advocacy Training in order to be re-licensed. Educational Advocacy Training is offered following each Foster PRIDE/Adopt PRIDE training and many additional times. This six-hour course covers information foster parents need to know so that they can advocate for their foster children's educational rights and needs.

COOK NORTH

Association House - Spanish
Aug. 20 (Sat) 9:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

City Colleges of Chicago
June 11 (Sat) 9:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.
Aug. 1 & 3 (Mon/Wed) 6:30-9:30 p.m.

Irish American Heritage Center
July 16 (Sat) 9:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

COOK CENTRAL

Circle Urban Ministries
Aug. 22 & 24 (Mon/Wed) 6:30-9:30 p.m.

Sequin Services, Cicero
June 13 & 15 (Mon/Wed) 5:30-8:30 p.m.

Hephzibah, Oak Park
June 25 (Sat) 9:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

Lutheran Child & Family Svcs.
July 30 (Sat) 9:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

COOK SOUTH

DCFS South Area Office
June 21 & 23 (Tue/Thu) 6:30-9:30 p.m.
July 23 (Sat) 9:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.
Aug. 18 & 23 (Thu/Tue) 6:30-9:30 p.m.
Aug. 27 (Sat) 9:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

FORUM
June 9 & 14 (Tue/Thu) 6-9 p.m.

DCFS Harvey Office
June 27 & 29 (Mon/Wed) 6:30-9:30 p.m.
July 9 (Sat) 9:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.
Aug. 17 & 22 (Wed/Mon) 6:30-9:30 p.m.

Illinois Mentor, Matteson
June 3 (Fri) 9:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

All classes are coordinated by Harold Washington College in Chicago.

Call 312-553-5821 or -3031 to register.